

Your Honor,

You know a great deal about me in some of my worst moments – episodes of violent physical attacks and psychological abuse that changed the course of my life and continues to affect me. But I want you to know that before I met Karim Elkorany, my life was different.

My name is [REDACTED]. I worked in the humanitarian aid and development sector in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] before accepting a job with [REDACTED] in Iraq.

When I came to Iraq, I was in love and that relationship changed what I envisioned for my life. I was happy. Although far from home, I had a lifeline to supportive loved ones and was able to pursue my career in good health.

I would lose all these things after meeting Karim.

In 2014, I met Karim in Erbil. He said the [REDACTED] Iraq office was hiring, and they offered me a consultancy. Gregarious and charismatic, Karim waxed lyrical about the privilege and prestige of working for the UN over dinner, or drinks, or cups of tea. I felt proud to work for the U.N.

It was there that Karim began to drug and assault me. This would often happen over an evening cup of Chamomile tea. Because I was drugged, I couldn't hold the memory in my head long enough to process it, let alone talk about it. I was confused and ashamed. Soon, I would find myself utterly isolated due to what I now recognize as a systematic effort to cut me off from my entire support network.

My immediate supervisor was a man named Jeffrey Bates, but he was rarely in the office. His absence left Karim unsupervised, unaccountable, and in charge of [REDACTED] section. His position offered him an enormous amount of influence and numerous opportunities to supervise me directly and, as a result, chances to sexually assault me. Normal requests quickly became an exercise in control, authority, and humiliation. "*You can't make that call home, I'm calling a meeting.*" "*I need to know where you are at all times, it's a security issue.*" "*You can't leave this room until I say you're done with work.*"

I did not always follow these directions. I did not have a problem saying that I disagreed with his directives, but I was new in the office and was striving to do meaningful work and to be successful and a good team player. Even under the threats of professional retaliation (as a consultant, my position lacked the job security that Karim enjoyed as a permanent employee), coupled with the effect of frequently being drugged without my knowledge, I was committed to the work.

It was extremely difficult to enforce any boundaries because Karim did not respect any boundaries. One of his favorite sayings was, "*You like to say no,*" just before he transgressed whatever boundary I'd set, even physical ones. He would block or lock doors, in the office and housing alike – to prevent me from leaving.

On one occasion, Karim locked me in a room and held the door closed, as I fought to open it. I screamed for help. When I stopped screaming, Karim came into the room to gloat, laughing: “*Look at where you are. This is Iraq. No one’s coming. Even if they do hear you, they’ll say it’s a domestic issue. No one’s coming.*” I considered jumping out of the window. I saw no other way out.

After one particular incident, I no longer reported to Karim in name. But little changed in practice. I had refused to work in Karim’s hotel room. As we were both exiting the elevator, he grabbed me from behind, and dragged me to his room as I fought him. To this day, when I walk down the hallway of any hotel, I have flashbacks to my fingertips crimped around the molding of passing doors, and my feet planting midway up the wall, trying to push off and throw our balance. Inside the room, I was in shock, unable to move. Hotel security came to the room, but Karim waved them off by showing his two blue passports – United States and United Nations – and giving an umbrage-laden excuse about being a diplomat.

Other UN staff knew about Karim. Before I ever set foot in Iraq, someone warned me to watch out for him. The first day that I arrived on the UN Compound, someone approached me and said: “The moment I saw you, I knew who hired you.”

Your Honor may wonder why I did not just leave Iraq. In short, as a result of Karim’s repeated drugging and sexual assaults I was feeling physically, mentally, and emotionally out of sorts. I was exhausted. The physical effects alone were debilitating. In addition to blacking out, the drugs he used to rape me caused my heart to race. I had uncontrollable tremors. I had problems with memory recall. I hallucinated. I was hypervigilant, and tense. I had blinding headaches, and my jaw ached, in part because the drugs made me grind my teeth severely. When the sexual assaults occurred, I would arrive at the office in zombie-like states and struggle with my work due to the brain fog. When I felt sick in the mornings after being drugged, Karim readily offered that he *also* had ‘food poisoning’ from eating the same meal. I sincerely thought I was losing my mind and that I must be dying. The alternatives were unthinkable. I felt like a failure for “losing it” but it is not in my nature to concede defeat.

I just kept trying, each day, to show up, do my job, do it well. In short, I was trying to be myself – the person I was when I arrived in Iraq that first day.

I felt utterly alone. I was trapped by Karim’s manipulation, gaslighting, and outright lies, all designed to further isolate me and make me feel beholden to just him.

The manipulation was severe and far-reaching. Karim was my primary point of contact in Erbil. He would introduce me to other colleagues. Early on, he relayed that some of these people had made inappropriate comments about me, and that he had corrected them, “but just thought that I should know” so I could avoid them. He tried, and to an extent succeeded, in making me feel that he was my only ally.

It was hard to counter Karim’s version of events – that he “cared” about me, that surely, I cared about him, too. To some extent, he convinced me that I had simply experienced a lot of life upheaval that correlated with the humanitarian response to mass atrocities and adverse reactions

to the exposure to the immense suffering of others. He exploited the backdrop of violent conflict and overlapping humanitarian emergencies for their sense of urgency and the esprit de corps this inspired, including working around the clock. Sometimes I would wake up in his room, and my brain would not work. I woke up in vulnerable states, and Karim would tell me, through laughter or a stifled smirk, of some embarrassing thing that I'd done or said, but because of his upstanding character, he would keep it a secret between us. I was filled with rage but didn't know where to direct it. I didn't understand how this kept happening and I was angry at myself. Karim always had a ready explanation: "*You must just trust me; you relax around me; if you didn't want to be here, you wouldn't.*"

Even as he fought to keep me assigned to [REDACTED] section, Karim would tell me my problems at work were a result of my performance and lack of professionalism. After a colleague had seen me slack jawed and drooling from the drugs, Karim told me that I needed to present myself better to avoid being fired and shared that he had provided similar mentorship and guidance to others – a statement that, in retrospect, chills me to my core. He encouraged me to apologize to management for “falling asleep” in meetings when I was still feeling the effects of the drugging from the night before. One morning, while I was still feeling the effects of the drugs Karim had used to rape me, I somehow managed to get dressed, get in a cab, go to the office - I was on autopilot. I was told later that I walked around the office before going back to the hotel. I had no recollection of going into work or interacting with colleagues. Given our locale, this was extremely dangerous. Karim would use this incident to question my recollection of virtually anything: “*You don't even know what you've done.*” He added to the alarm by sharing updates about the security situation that he had received from his numerous journalistic contacts, specifically about attempted kidnappings and ISIS infiltrators. I now believe these were fabricated, but at the time, they were plausible.

Throughout all of this, I felt alone. Karim ensured I was by isolating me from my friends and family – the people who truly cared about my wellbeing. For example:

- Karim often drugged me on nights that I was scheduled to speak with my boyfriend or family. My disappearing for long periods of time without excuse damaged those relationships.
- Karim changed telephone numbers in my phone, so that I'd be unable to get in touch with loved ones when I needed to.
- Karim deleted email messages from my boyfriend and family and blocked and removed contacts in my Skype account. On several occasions in Erbil, I was able to dial or answer the phone while still under heavy sedation. The receiver would hear me briefly – tearful, pleading, upset - and then I'd fade back out. The confusion and embarrassment caused by this, as well as the sense of being unable to get help, sunk me further into isolation.
- Karim ensured that his controlling reach was ever-present, even when he was out of the country or when we were in different cities. He had his friends monitor and report on my whereabouts and contacts in Iraq. I didn't know who was watching. I felt like I was being surveilled because I was, but Karim convinced me that I was being just paranoid. When confronted, Karim conveyed, roughly: “*No matter what people say to your face, they'll always be loyal to me.*”

- Karim successfully lobbied to restrict my ability to take leave in June and December 2014. When I did take leave from Iraq, my PTSD was pronounced and exacerbated by the drug withdrawal symptoms. The person who came home to family in [REDACTED] was not the person who had left months before.

Karim made me feel guilty for my own isolation – isolation that he masterminded. When I was particularly low and lamenting how alone I truly was and how I didn't understand how I got there, he conveyed a message to the effect of: "*I'm glad you're finally taking ownership. Your behavior may have driven other people away, but I'm still here because I care about you.*"

The real bonds that I had with friends and family that Karim intentionally destroyed while I was in Erbil continue to impact my support system today. The loss of the relationship with my boyfriend and several close friends felt like a resounding rejection of my worth and allowed Karim's manipulation to continue.

Karim's public persona made it especially hard to determine friend or foe. We had common contacts from when we each lived in [REDACTED]. In public, he was eager to help me and others. He'd bring food and drinks for colleagues in the office. When I had tremors, he brought me lavender oil "for my nerves," invited me to join him for mindfulness meditation, and proposed anxiety-relieving breathing techniques. His manipulative use of methods to calm my nervous system has made therapy additionally complex and triggering. I cannot help but hear Karim's voice when my therapist has suggested ways to help me manage my PTSD to keep it from further impacting my ability to function day to day.

I mistook Karim for a friend, and – after he isolated me from others – a romantic partner. Even then I would have moments where I questioned whether I was being drugged but these thoughts overwhelmed me and I did not know whom to trust or whom to tell. I could not go to the Kurdish police, and I did not trust the U.N. I believed that my fragmented explanations and positive interactions with Karim would be used to discredit my reports. I oscillated between confrontation and compliance. The dissonance of his disarming disposition against his malicious character is breathtaking to me still today.

I know that this statement should be about the impact that his crimes have had on me, but I would like to note that it does not include related details on the environment within [REDACTED] that enabled and normalized his abuse, or my experiences seeking help, and the impediments, deterrents, and outright denial that I encountered. It does not include what I now know about trauma's impact on the brain and revictimization. Although I know it, I still feel like I have to persuade others that happened was not the result of an intrinsic character flaw in me, but the encounter with a driven, sophisticated, and practiced criminal.

Karim also threatened my job and reputation. He repeatedly threatened to leverage his relationships with management to have me fired, and ominously warned about the damage a negative reference from the United Nations could have on my ability to find other employment. He threatened to convey private information or compromising images of me to family, friends, and coworkers.

When I [REDACTED] as a result of one of Karim's sexual assaults, I felt betrayed once again – this time, [REDACTED]. I was terrified and utterly heartbroken. Nowhere was safe. I [REDACTED] after great difficulties, yet I struggled to [REDACTED]. Finding a doctor to consult in any country was mired by logistical issues, stigma, language barriers, cultural dynamics, and a confusing legal landscape overlaid by a sense of desperation and urgency.

In a short period of time I experienced a debilitating amount of loss and grief. I lost a great deal, very, very fast.

The mental and emotional pain I was experiencing was so severe and debilitating that I subconsciously shut down my ability to feel, and to this day, have trouble accessing, identifying, and trusting my emotions. I was unable to tell which way was up, which way was out.

I have struggled with [REDACTED], in a visceral way, since that time. I do not, in any way, regret my decision. But the [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], and I was grief stricken. I felt forever robbed. I felt too broken to be loved.

Shortly after [REDACTED], my contract with [REDACTED] ended. I was suddenly unemployed. I felt like a failure.

Without a job or a community, I had trouble reintegrating into life at home in [REDACTED]. I returned to work in Iraq where I was welcomed back. Things were normal for a while – “normal,” as in I was not being drugged and raped. My new job in [REDACTED] was in many ways my dream job. And then suddenly it wasn’t.

The attacks started again, and when I tried to get away from Karim in 2015, it was difficult and dangerous. I have reviewed Karim’s sentencing submission to the Court, which cites this behavior. While I do not comment on many aspects of it, I do wish to clarify some facts of which Karim speaks, and which illustrates his propensity to create a narrative that paints him in a flattering light.

Specifically, in Paragraph 32 of Karim’s sentencing submission, he combines two separate events to create a false narrative. Reading this is like being subject to gaslighting all over again. He states, *“There was one incident in which Mr. Elkorany and Victim 2 hosted a party in their shared apartment. Everyone drank heavily, including Mr. Elkorany and Victim 2. The result was arguments between attendees, including an argument between Mr. Elkorany and Victim 2. Victim-2 struck Mr. Elkorany with a closed fist and he reacted by instinctively slapping her. In response she announced that she was going to leave. The time of the argument was 4 am. Mr. Elkorany prevented her from leaving as he was concerned about her safety should she walk alone in the streets of a war-zone in Iraq at that hour.”*

- During the first event, Karim, journalist [REDACTED], and I were discussing a report of sexual assault in the news. Karim and [REDACTED] were fixated on the notion of false allegations and what level of proof was required to confirm sexual assault. I explained to [REDACTED] the challenges in reporting sexual assault, and began saying, “This happened to me” repeatedly. [REDACTED] countered by saying that I was biased; that what I was saying was

riddled with logical fallacies. I began to have a panic attack. A friend of mine tried to comfort me and fought (verbally) with Karim.

- In the second event, I had been trying to get away from Karim, physically, until I could leave the country. One night, I was trying to leave the apartment but Karim took my cell phone. He said, “You can’t go outside without a cell phone – it’s Iraq, it’s unsafe.” I demanded it back, he refused. He was standing with my cellphone in his hand, above his head. I slapped him, and he dropped the phone. I picked it up and scrambled backwards into my bedroom. He followed me, and hit me in the face, knocking me into an armoire. Stunned, I said, “You hit me.” In the most neutral tone, he said, “No, I didn’t.”

When I got out, I went to a friend’s apartment, and she let me in. However, Karim had called her boyfriend, and he demanded I leave, saying that I was being dramatic. I was indeed out in the street, alone, with nowhere to go, after midnight, in Iraq. Karim was *not* concerned about my safety; he was concerned that I would talk. He did not hit me reflexively, he hit me to try to prevent me from leaving.

I eventually left Erbil for a job in an entirely different field. I desperately wanted to be normal. I was still confused. I could never be certain of what had happened, but it was painful, and I buried it.

The last time I saw Karim was in 2019 and I was under extreme stress. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I was having [REDACTED] (more on that in a moment) and needed to quickly set up an apartment. I’d recently returned from [REDACTED] and did not have local friends. Karim offered to come from New Jersey to help me move. When I refused alcohol, he drugged me in a yogurt parfait and raped me. When I went to the hospital, they treated me like I was overreacting; like I was crazy. They delayed several hours before telling me they did not have the capacity to conduct a rape kit. The police dismissed my report outright because, “if the hospital believed you’d been assaulted, they would have called us.”

No one would recognize me as a rape victim, and, as a result, I struggled to see myself in that light. I continue to struggle with feeling invisible and not understanding what about me made so many people doubt my seriousness, my candor and credibility.

The physical manifestations of Karim’s abuse eventually came to light. I finally saw a doctor in 2017 for [REDACTED]. It wasn’t until 2019 that the true nature of my injury became clear. Tests showed that [REDACTED]. My [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I believe this injury was a result of the drugging, and that Karim [REDACTED] by forcing my leg out of the natural range of motion during the sexual assaults.

I required several surgeries. When I was sedated for the first surgery, I fought and cried out as the medicine kicked in and faceless surgical staff began to move my immobilized body to the operating table - a familiar terror. I spent 18 months on crutches or with a cane. I spent more than 100 hours in physical therapy. I had to re-learn how to walk, *twice*. I have 17 inches of scars as a daily reminder of the damage to my health and relatedly, several lost career opportunities. I do

not even know what else may be coming. Coping with my physical injuries and PTSD continues to be a massive undertaking of time and resources.

Your Honor, Page 15 of Karim's sentencing submission states that, "*Mr. Elkorany is unlikely to recidivate*" in part because he has "*a supportive interpersonal environment...Mr. Elkorany has always been able to integrate himself into a network of supportive friends.*"

It is the last part of that statement that should give us all pause.

Karim had a "supportive interpersonal environment" when I knew him. Here's how he leveraged his connections:

- He used his community to gain trust and as a shield from suspicion.
- He relied on his connections – his friends from the United Nations, the Wall Street Journal, NBC News, the Washington Post, Human Rights Watch, and the U.S. State Department – to provide signs of legitimacy and reputation enhancers.
- He used his family situation and the strains they were under to build rapport and elicit empathy, drawing heavily on his younger brother's [REDACTED], his sister's [REDACTED], and his father's [REDACTED] surgery.

It was Karim's ability to integrate and ingratiate himself "into a network of supportive friends" that enabled his crimes. His friends and family did not, cannot, and will not be able to make his decisions for him, nor can they be trusted to raise the alarm.

Your Honor, I implore you to recognize the risk that Karim, even when incarcerated, will duplicate his exploitative, coercive and dangerous behavior to protect himself. I do not want someone else to have that feeling, like I did, of being trapped, mentally, physically, or emotionally, under Karim's reality-twisting yoke.

Karim is a world-class liar and peppers his deception with truth. He can feign deferential, but his nature is domineering. He can perform empathy, but only as a tool to find vulnerabilities to exploit. He can mimic cultural norms but disrespects the values that unite any peoples – care for the sick, aid to the suffering, the bonds we build by breaking bread.

To Karim, we are all fools and suckers for not exploiting these norms to our advantage.

Throughout my time working at [REDACTED], Karim would say, "*No one will know what you did here but you,*" implying how easy it would be to lie about one's experience. This is consistent with his characterization of his work in Iraq, specifically the level of violence he was exposed to. Working in External Communications, Karim spoke to journalists. He wrote press releases. He tweeted. His effort to gain clout by painting himself as some sort of "humanitarian Rambo" does not align with the nature of his job, nor of his reported experience in the entire time I knew him.

There is no element of his intelligence that exists independent of its utility to manipulate and deceive.

I do not want to live in the past, but I am haunted by it daily. For years, I cried myself to sleep. Now, I wake up, remember the nightmare, and realize that's a real part of my life. It's still so surreal, so utterly unfair. It is a permanent, unyielding homesickness, longing for the ephemeral joys and time and hope I once had, but that can never get back.

Had Karim not stolen them, I expect these years of my life would have been filled with marriage and children. Instead, PTSD continues to strain my relationships because the familiar is the most frightening. I struggle with intense feelings of abandonment. I struggle to form relationships and to feel connected to anyone. I struggle with intimacy and feeling like my body isn't mine. I am filled with adrenaline and intrusive thoughts. I still have nightmares, and shout or cry or whimper in my sleep. I'm unable to focus. I still have to suppress the desire to lie about my location or my company, because even a sniff of being monitored, or watched, is triggering. I have struggled to regain my confidence and identity. I feel like I wear this; like others can see it on me. I've had to reform the building blocks of my life again and again and I don't know where I fit in the world. When I came home in 2016, a friend asked, "Why don't you have any dreams anymore?" It's hard to know what I want because I've lost what I want so many times.

All of this because of one man's devious plotting, his evil and entitled greed; his reckless disregard for my safety, my wellbeing, my life. His failure to see me as a whole person.

Karim leans on the adage, "Hurt people, hurt people." But hurt people also help people.

I survived unspeakable, grotesque, humiliating things. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Still, just after I'd been assaulted in [REDACTED] and could not walk, I organized a donation drive for a homeless shelter. Still, during the justice process, I lobbied [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to meaningfully implement the Survivors' Access to Supportive Care Act, legislation arising from the case of another woman who was unable to get a rape kit at the hospital. Karim and I both encountered people in vulnerable situations. I did my best to show up for them, because I know what it feels like to need a hand. Karim chose, again, and again, to hurt me, because he thought that he could get away with it. He watched, up close and unperturbed, as I suffered – and I did suffer – as I lost almost everything that was dear to me.

But if Karim's intent was to break the precious and gritty parts of me, he failed. His crimes have touched every part of my life, but my core character remains.

This case has had a huge impact on me, and the people around me, as we held our breath for it to proceed. With each delay, I began to fear that it was all for naught.

The government could not have assuaged my concerns. I have watched how victims of sexual abuse are treated in courtrooms and in the media; how they are picked apart, demeaned and denigrated. I knew the defense would do the same. I spent much of the past two years involuntarily re-living, over and over, details and flashbacks, afraid throughout my therapy and healing that I'd somehow forget and fail as a witness. I was again exhausted, isolated, paralyzed and spent many days under a weighted blanket in the corner of my bedroom in the dark.

I had no idea this had happened to anyone else, let alone so many other people. I know it was not *my* fault, just as it was not *our* fault. None of us would have chosen this and we are not responsible for his evil acts. And yet, my biggest fear since learning of the many other victims is that somehow my shortcomings left others exposed.

Although Karim will not “get away with” what he’s done, I feel that nothing short of the maximum allowable sentence is appropriate.

I offer my heartfelt thanks and respect to the other women. I am so sorry this happened to you. I wish you solace and privacy.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Justice for their indefatigable focus, for their commitment, for their skill and respect. I’m forever grateful.

I also want to recognize my friends and loved ones. Your support continues to mean so much to me.